

Coolabah, No.19, 2016, ISSN 1988-5946, *Observatori: Centre d'Estudis Australians / Australian Studies Centre, Universitat de Barcelona*

Introduction

Sue Ballyn
The Australian Studies Centre
Universitat de Barcelona
susan.ballyn@gmail.com

Copyright©2016 Sue Ballyn. This text may be archived and redistributed both in electronic form and in hard copy, provided that the author and journal are properly cited and no fee is charged, in accordance with our Creative Common Licence.

Associate Professor Justin Dabner spent part of the academic year 2014-2015 as a Visiting Fellow at the Australian Studies Centre at Barcelona University.

The Centre was enriched by his willingness to participate in the day to day work of the Centre and in the many discussions that took place with members of the Department staff who regularly drop in and out of the Centre. Typically, Dabner accepted to bring out a monograph volume of *Coolabah* on aspects of law. His idea in a first instance was to include other authors but this did not materialize as authors he approached were already committed and with a burden of deadlines, the bane of all academics.

Martin Renes and I then floated the idea that he should be the sole author and we would send out the peer reference sheets. Dabner agreed and thus this volume came into being. It is not atypical among the issues of *Coolabah* as there have been other monograph issues with a single author.

In this volume Dabner deals with the complications that arise in a nation which takes the model of British Common law for its judiciary, for both Indigenous people and its multicultural society. As Dabner posits, "Taking the instances of Indigenous and Islamic law, it will be observed that legal plurality exists in Australia but largely in the shadows where the vulnerable of society lack protection. It proposes an institutional response that might help shine a light on these shadows"

In a second article, Dabner moves into a totally different terrain, climate change, a subject of concern for every nation and one touched on by Bill Boyd in his monograph edition of *Coolabah*: Postcolonial Times: Lock the Gate or Pull Down the Fences?

<http://revistes.ub.edu/index.php/coolabah/issue/view/1328>

Dabner points out that climate change, responsible environmental politics and action are, perhaps, Australia's "greatest moral challenge" notwithstanding other moral challenges such as those represented by "(...) The treatment of the first Australians, of refugees, of non-European immigrants, of same sex orientated individuals (...)." Australia, like the rest of the world, must meet this challenge if the planet is to survive.

Sue Ballyn

21st November 2016